

**International
Electrical**



**Brotherhood
Workers**

AFL-CIO

Local Union No. 332

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April 30, 2013

Jennifer Schembri, Deputy Director
Office of Employee Relations
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara St.,
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Shortage of Electrical Workers in Santa Clara Valley

Dear Jennifer:

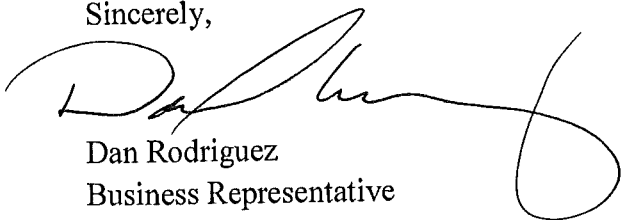
The City of San Jose has been feeling the impact of a skilled labor shortage. This skilled labor shortage is not only applicable to the City of San Jose, but also to many parts of the country that are only now emerging from the recent downturn in the economy. One of the skilled occupations that is currently in high demand is the certified electrical worker whose skills require various training.

Due to the high demand for skilled electrical workers in Santa Clara Valley and due to the below market wage package with which the City of San Jose is compensating these workers, the City of San Jose is experiencing an electrical workers labor shortage. The IBEW has determined the average electrical worker employed by the City of San Jose is underpaid by 20 to 40 percent for comparable work of non-City employees with similar backgrounds and qualifications who work in Santa Clara County. The fact the City has historically underpaid its workers has, in the past, been offset by the respectable benefit package and paid time off that was once provided its employees. Now the benefits are being systematically reduced or eliminated, there is much less likelihood that someone would be willing to accept the reduction in compensation without the increased benefits as they had previously done. The City of San Jose's once lofty and commendable hiring requirements for electrical workers provided the City with highly skilled, accomplished, and competent employees. These workers have been able to build and maintain the City's electrical infrastructure to create a safe and hazard free environment for its citizens and employees.

If the City continues losing its current workforce of electrical workers, coupled with the low likelihood of replacing it with similarly qualified electrical workers, the hazards that arise from the use of electricity will likely be compounded. Regardless of the cause, the City of San Jose now faces a dilemma on whether to keep its electrical infrastructure safe and reliable for its citizens and employees or risk putting its citizens in danger from poorly installed and maintained electrical equipment. In most cases, the replacement of qualified workers with unqualified workers merely causes an inconvenience, but with electrical threats like step or touch potential or the potentially lethal "contact voltage", unqualified workers could not only overlook potentially lethal electrical problems, they could create them! Qualified electrical workers have the knowledge and skills to locate and eliminate these hazards associated with the use of electricity, keeping the public safeguarded from these dangerous conditions.

Because the City chose to cut the wage and benefit package of electrical workers, it is now experiencing an exodus of its qualified, highly skilled, and experienced workforce. If it is unable to reinstate the wages and benefits of its workers, the City will have a difficult time replacing the qualified employees it will soon lose. We hope the City of San Jose understands the extreme severity of this predicament and will soon find a way to seriously address the problems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Rodriguez', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Dan Rodriguez
Business Representative
IBEW LU 332

RD:jamc/opeiu#29/afl-cio